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Bre'onna Shockley

Pittsburg State University

Marisela Resendiz

Pittsburg State University

Hyejoon Park

Pittsburg State University

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FOOD SECURITY @ PITT STATE

BRE'ONNA SHOCKLEY and MARISELA RESENDIZ

PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

College can be a tough experience for the average student. According to Cady (2014) as cited from Broton, K. M., & Goldrick-Rab (2018) undergraduate students experience food insecurity at a higher rate than the average population. There are many reasons why a college student may be suffering from food insecurity. In 2014, 14% of households in the United States were considered food insecure (Coleman-Jensen, Rabbit, Gregory, & Singh, 2015) cited from (Silva, M. R., Kleinert, W. L., Victoria Sheppard, A., Cantrell, K. A., Freeman-Coppadge, D. J., Tsoy, E., ... Pearrow, M., 2017). A college students current socioeconomic status contributes to food insecurity. A students living situation also plays a role and could be a barrier to success. These barriers can also create mental distress. In a study done in the University of Georgia researchers found that unsatisfactory performance in school was connected to depression amongst students (Rasking, G. I. Haardofer, R. Berg, J. C. 2019).

When students do not have a sense of security of food and a student is hungry, he does not feel safe, and it is hard to help him synthesize class material (Broton, K. M., & Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Energy comes and leaves out of the body through foods consumed (Mukigi, D. Thornton, K. Binion, A. Brown, K. Church, M. 2018. According to Mukigi, D. Thornton, K. Binion, A. Brown, K. Church, M. (2018) students felt that they did not receive the appropriate amount of nutrients.

BACKGROUND

When students do not have a sense of security of food and a student is hungry, he does not feel safe, and it is hard to help him synthesize class material (Broton, K. M., & Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Energy comes and leaves out of the body through foods consumed (Mukigi, D. Thornton, K. Binion, A. Brown, K. Church, M. 2018. According to Mukigi, D. Thornton, K. Binion, A. Brown, K. Church, M. (2018) students felt that they did not receive the appropriate amount of nutrients. Meeting students' basic needs is vital for them to fully concentrate on obtaining the information in a class in a way that they can apply it, learn, and take it forward (Broton, K. M., & Goldrick-Rab, 2018). The difficulties of being a college student are many but when a student lacks food security the stressors can increase and create many barriers towards their learning (Rasking, G. I. Haardofer, R. Berg, J. C. 2019). Students will often find themselves eating inexpensive unhealthy foods that affect their physical health and mental health in the long run (Mukigi, D. Thornton, K. Binion, A. Brown, K. Church, M. 2018). According to Meza, A. Altman, E. Martinez, S. & Leung, C. W. (2018) many students will struggle to connect with their peers due to not having the financial means to buy food in a social setting as it is a common activity amongst college students. Students often feel the need to lie about their situation to their friends and peers to avoid feeling ashamed for lacking food security.

METHODOLOGY

Participant Demographics

Participant 1) a 21 + year old white Female

Participant 2) a 50 year old white Female

Participant 3) a 20 year old white Female

Participant 4) a 22 year old Hispanic Male

Research Questions

Within the last year (What have your eating conditions been like?)

If you have been lacking food what may be some of the reasons?

What emotions do you have about your food insecurity?

Do you have a job?

Do you have access to a vehicle?

Do you live on or off campus?

Are you from a low income family receiving a Pell grant or other financial assistance/benefits?

Do you feel that your grades are affected about your hunger?

What interventions would make you feel more secure with food?

SAMPLING

This qualitative study used the Purposive sampling method to locate participants in this study. The interviews taken by researchers were conducted with a Semi structured interview. Each Participant is an undergraduate student enrolled at Pittsburg State University. Each interview was conducted on the Pittsburg State Campus conducted in person.

Themes of the study

Feelings students have towards their food insecurity and how it affects them emotionally.

Circumstances that affect participants ability to obtain food or enough food.

Living conditions of participants and their housing situation.

RESULTS

Feelings students have towards their food insecurity and how it affects them emotionally.

Participant 1) Reported feelings of shame and guilt for have low food insecurity

Participant 2) Reported feeling of shame for her age she stated that she feels she should "be further along" because of her age.

Participant 3) Reported sadness and shame towards her lack of food stability.

Participant 4) Reported feelings of anger, shamefulness, and "pride".

Circumstances that affect participants ability to obtain food or enough food.

Participant 1) Reported loss of housing assistance or HUD. Loss of Job do to lack of childcare.

Participant 2) Reported not having enough income from her part-time employment.

Participant 3) Reported lack of resources, lack of child care, and currently being unemployed.

Participant 4) Reported unemployment and not enough support from his parents due to their own financial needs.

Living conditions of participants and their housing situation.

Participant 1) Reported living off campus living in an apartment since 2012 but is expecting to have to move out of the apartment she has been residing in since 2012.

Participant 2) Reported living off campus in a home.

Participant 3) Reported living off campus

Participant 4) Reported living in Crimson Commons (Apartment style dorms) at Pittsburg State University.

CONCLUSIONS

Participants in this study all have reported information in regards to their food security. All participants are Pittsburg State University undergraduate students. Each participant in this qualitative study reported feelings of shame. Each participant currently has housing participants 1,2,and 3 reported living off campus and participant 4 living on campus at the dorms. Participants 1,3, and 4 all reported being unemployed. Participant 2 reported working part time. Participant 1 and 3 reported a lack of childcare as being a contributing factor to their food insecurity. Participant 2 reported under employment with her current job. Participants 1,3, and 4 reported being unemployed as a factor to their food insecurity. All participant have reported receiving financial aid for school tuition. Participants 1and 2 reported receiving Medicaid and snap benefits in their homes. Participant 1 reported have a resources officer on campus to help student connect with resources would be beneficial on campus. Participant 2 stated that having reduced cost meals on campus would be beneficial. Participant 3 reported that food security "is not talked about" on campus. Participant 4 reported applying for the parent plus loan. All participants reported that a Food Pantry on campus would be beneficial providing the "basics" (participant 4).

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CONTACT INFORMATION

bshockley@gus.pittstate.edu

Mresendiz-gallegous@gus.pittstate.edu